GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5204
ANSWERED ON:27.04.2000
TRANSPORT OF BULK CARGO
DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether average leads for the transport of bulk cargo has been declined for the past few years;

(b) if so, the falling trend of leads for the last five years along with the reasons therefor;

(c) whether due to decline in the leads the Indian Railways have been losing dry bulk cargo to the road sector and coastal shipping; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(a) Trends in lead (average distance of haul) during the last 5 years has been as under:-

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Average Lead (in Km)	684	692	679	662	669

The decline in leads have been due to several factors which, inter alia, include (i) reduction of the spatial gap between the centres of production and consumption (ii) self-sufficiency in foodgrain production in areas which were earlier deficient (iii) increase in imports (iv) development of coastal shipping and pipelines.

(c) & (d) Decline in lead does not indicate loss of originating traffic to other modes. It is a derived figure arrived at by dividing the transport output measured in terms of Net Tonne Kilometers by originating tonnage. Decline in lead of traffic is an inescapable phenomenon, as and when economy of any country develops, consequent to which alternative means of bulk transport such as pipelines and coastal shipping also proliferate. While deciding about modal choice, the factor of least cost to the economy is kept in view.